Okaloosa County
Five-Year
Transit Development Plan
2003-2007

Executive Summary
September 2002
Executive Summary
Okaloosa County Five-Year
Transit Development Plan
2003-2007

Prepared for Okaloosa County

In Cooperation with

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INTRODUCTION

The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) has produced for the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization a five-year Transit Development Plan (TDP) for the years 2003-2007. Each transit property in Florida that receives State Transit Block Grant funding is required by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to prepare a TDP. This requirement is intended to ensure that the provision of public transportation services is consistent with the travel needs and mobility goals of the local communities that are served by the transit system. By establishing a strategic focus and mission for transit services, the TDP can serve as a guide in the future development of the transit system that will meet the needs of the community that it serves.

A total of five chapters are included in the Okaloosa County TDP. Chapter One, Assessment of Community and Customer Transit Needs, presents the demographic characteristics for Okaloosa County, rider survey results analysis, summary of interviews with key local officials and community leaders, and summaries of group discussions and consultations with military installation officials. Chapter Two, Goals and Initiatives, identifies the goals and initiatives for the County's transit system as established by County staff, Okaloosa Coordinated Transportation, and members of the TDP Review Committee. Chapter Three, Performance Evaluation of Demand Response and Fixed-Route Transit Service, provides a performance review of the County's paratransit and fixed-route service. A trend and peer analysis of demand response service is included in this chapter; while performance criteria are identified for the County's fixed-route service. Chapter Four, Demand Estimation and Needs Assessment, presents ridership and demand projections for transit services for the five-year period, and a needs assessment for the system. Finally, Chapter Five, Transit Recommendations and Five-Year Operating Plan, proposes recommendations for public transportation services in the County and assigns costs to those recommendations. The following sections summarize the findings from each of these chapters in the TDP.

CHAPTER ONE: ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER TRANSIT NEEDS

The majority of this chapter is devoted to a close examination of person- and household-level demographic data for Okaloosa County using U.S. Census data. In this chapter, some demographic data for Walton County are also included to illustrate its relevance to the overall

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transportation picture for the area. Lastly, this chapter also includes a regional profile to illustrate trends in the larger area that might impact transportation needs for the future.

Demographic Summary

Data from the 2000 U.S. Census suggest that Okaloosa County has experienced moderate growth in comparison to the state, while Walton County has seen almost a fifty percent population increase during 1990-2000. Interestingly, there seems to be a shift in the population of Okaloosa County from the urban area (Fort Walton Beach) to Crestview. Crestview saw the greatest increase in population from 1990 to 2000. The demographic findings also indicate that residents of Okaloosa County are more likely to be younger than Florida residents in general, while Walton County is representative of the State in terms of the age of the population. In addition, household income and vehicle availability data indicate that the majority of the Okaloosa County population is middle to upper class. Walton County residents have household incomes slightly less than that of Okaloosa County and the State as a whole. However, more households in Walton County have access to vehicles than do State households, but that may be related to the fact that more than a third of Walton County residents work outside of the County.

Summary of Interviews with Key Local Officials

The persons interviewed during the 2002 TDP had similar concerns of those interviewed for the 1999 TDP. Since the deviated fixed-route services were introduced to the area after the adoption of the last TDP, this was the first opportunity for those interviewed to discuss how the service has or has not met the needs of the community. Overall, the interviewees were supportive of these deviated fixed-route services, and the majority of those suggested that OCT was doing a good job in operating these services. Much of the disappointment expressed by the interviewees was related to the lack of ridership and the difficulties with alerting the community about the transit services that exist. While initial ridership numbers are low, most of those interviewed were optimistic about the future of deviated fixed-route service in Okaloosa County and noted that other small, but now, successful systems in Florida shared similar, if not worse, starts. Most of those interviewed expressed a real need to provide additional service connecting the northern areas of the County with the south. The consensus of those interviewed was that until the community fully supports the transit system and the elected officials identify public transportation issues as a priority, the true potential of the public transit system would not be realized.
Summary of On-Board Passenger Survey Results

To determine detailed information about ridership on the WAVE, on-board surveys were used for data collection. The survey was distributed to bus passengers over a three-day period in March 2002. These surveys were designed to provide detailed information about customer demographic characteristics, travel behavior, and their satisfaction with certain aspects of the WAVE. This information can be used by the County in a variety of ways including the planning or enhancing of bus schedules, locating new bus stops, modifying the existing multi-category fare structure, planning focused marketing campaigns, establishing a base for future trend analysis, and comparing data with other public transit services offered in other areas of Florida. A number of interesting findings were identified from the survey results:

- The majority of survey respondents (43 percent) are between the ages of 40 and 49.
- Women account for over 66 percent of total ridership.
- Whites account for about 50 percent of ridership, while blacks account for one-third of the ridership. Hispanics account for just over three percent of the riders on the WAVE.
- Most of the WAVE customers (43 percent) have annual incomes between $10,000 and $19,999.
- Almost half (43 percent) took the trip to shop or run errands and 30 percent took the trip to go to work.
- The majority of customers use the WAVE four or more days per week (43 percent). Occasional riders (less than once a week) only account for about 3 percent of the WAVE’s customers.

Ridecheck Results

While conducting the on-board survey, the surveyors also conducted a ride-check of the Red, Blue, and Crestview WAVE Routes. This involved counting passengers as they board and alight at each stop and identifying the time of arrival at particular stops. The ride-check data revealed that the Crestview Route did not have specific problems with meeting the scheduled arrival times at most bus stops. In fact, during the ride-check period the Crestview WAVE bus was no later than three minutes for any one stop.

On the other hand, the ride-check data showed that the Blue and Red routes incurred much more difficulty in relation to on-time performance. There were times when both the Blue and Red routes were over 15 minutes later than the scheduled arrival time.
Summary of Public Involvement Activities

Another integral part of the TDP process is the inclusion of opportunities for public involvement. Both users and non-users can provide useful information to a transit system. The perceptions and observations from participants in public workshops should be considered in the development of the transit system's goals and objectives. This TDP process included public involvement activities with the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) of the TPO, the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) of the TPO, the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Council (TDC), Okaloosa County Council on Aging Meals Program, and the Public Transportation Planning Workshop sponsored by the Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton Counties and the Okaloosa and Walton Counties Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Boards.

Discussions focused on perceptions and awareness of public transportation in general and of transit in Okaloosa County specifically. Overall, the County and Okaloosa Coordinated Transportation were applauded for making available more transportation alternatives to the residents and visitors of Okaloosa County. Access to jobs and connections between North and South Okaloosa County were common topics that came up in the various public involvement activities.

CHAPTER TWO: GOAL AND INITIATIVES

One of the most important steps in the preparation of a TDP is the identification of goals and initiatives for the transit system. Chapter One summarized the policy issues identified in formal discussions that CUTR held with community leaders, the TDP Review Committee, County staff, and the general public. The issues highlighted during these discussions form the basis for the goals and initiatives for Okaloosa County's transit system.

Based on community opinion, as well as supportive demographic data, five goals along with corresponding initiatives were developed and presented in detail in Chapter Two. The goals are identified as follows:

**Goal 1:** Expand Fixed-Route Services throughout the Fort Walton Beach Urbanized Area

**Goal 2:** Maximize Coordinated Transportation and Integrate Paratransit Services and Expanded Fixed-Route Services

**Goal 3:** Communicate the Role of Transit in Okaloosa County and Expand Ridership

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**Goal 4:** Identify Funding and Partnership Opportunities and Secure the Resources Necessary to Ensure that the System Operates Effectively

**Goal 5:** Coordinate with State and Local Government and Transportation Agencies to Integrate Transit Needs into the Land Use Planning and Development Process

**CHAPTER THREE: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF DEMAND RESPONSE AND FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT SERVICE**

Chapter Three summarizes the performance evaluation of Okaloosa County's existing demand response and fixed-route transit services, which is a fundamental task in the development of the TDP. The performance evaluation for the County's demand response system contains two analyses, a trend analysis and a peer review analysis. Trend analysis examines the system's performance over a multi-year time period. Peer review compares the performance of Okaloosa County's demand response services with that of other similar transit systems. Okaloosa County's fixed-route service has been evaluated and reported, however, neither a trend nor peer analysis is presented due to the infancy and size of the service.

**Demand Response – Trend Analysis**

The results of the trend analysis indicate that the DR service had an increase in the number of passenger trips since 1998 (from 96,300 to 116,604); however, an overall decrease in trips were reported for entire trend period of FY 1996-2000 (125,196 to 116,604). A corresponding decline in vehicle and revenue miles occurred during the period 1996-1998. Likewise, vehicle and revenue miles have grown steadily during FY 1998-2000. Total operating expenses over the analysis period decreased 24 percent (from $1,025,105 to $824,149). A decrease in the number of employees for OCT was reported over the same time period, with the exception of FY 1999, when OCT added three employees.

The DR system's performance strengths and areas for improvement are based on effectiveness and efficiency measures and identified in Table 3-1. This information is not provided to suggest the extent of the strength or need for improvement, but to identify those areas where the performance of the DR system has improved or declined from 1996 to 2000. With regard to the trend analysis, a performance strength is defined as any performance area that improved or was maintained over the trend analysis time period and an area for improvement is defined as a trend that declined over the trend analysis time period.
### Table 3-1
Okaloosa County's DR Performance Summary, Trend Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Areas for Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Miles</td>
<td>Passenger Trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Miles per Capita</td>
<td>Revenue Miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Expense</td>
<td>Passenger Trips per Capita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expense per Capita</td>
<td>Average Age of Fleet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expense per Revenue Mile</td>
<td>Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expense per Passenger Trip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles Available for Maximum Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears that during the analysis period, although overall passenger trips declined, the County’s DR system has maintained service levels by keeping operating expenses down, and increasing its efficiency of service. Although the average age of fleet has increased slightly over the analysis period, the system has strengthened its ability to provide more passenger trips per revenue hour and mile, with a lower overall operating cost.

**Demand Response – Peer Group Analysis**

A peer review analysis for fiscal year 2000 was also conducted to compare the performance of the County’s DR system against that of similar systems in Florida and the loosely defined southeastern area of the United States. A peer group analysis is important because it provides a comparison of how well the transit system is performing relative to similar fixed-route systems that also operate demand-response service, and it helps to establish realistic performance standards for the overall evaluation of the transit services offered.

According to the results of the peer group analysis, Okaloosa County’s DR system has a service area much smaller than that of the peer group mean. The smallest peer group had a service area of 79 miles, with the largest servicing 2,988 miles. The County currently serves approximately a 200 square mile area. Likewise, the County provides service to a service area population of about 162,000, about 54 percent less than the peer group mean. Even with the smaller service area and population, Okaloosa County only provides 11 percent less passenger trips than the group mean. The County’s DR vehicle miles, revenue miles and revenue hours are all approximately 25 percent less than the peer group mean. And while Okaloosa County operates 22 percent more vehicles in maximum service, its total operating expenses are less than half of the peer group mean. Although fewer trips are provided by Okaloosa County than the peer group average, the County’s total operating expenses are less than half of the peer group mean.
While the County provides less DR service than the peer group average, it is keeping its operating costs relatively low.

Fixed Route – Performance Analysis

Performance measures provide general information related to overall system performance. Usually, these performance measures are compared to the results of a peer group comparison. However, due to the small size of the County’s fixed-route service, the infancy of the service, and the absence of all fixed-route operational information (WAVE and Shuttle data), a peer group comparison was not possible. However, as the system matures and expands in the future and more data is collected, peer analysis will enable the County to review how their system compares to other transit systems.

The County’s service supply, as measured by the number of vehicle miles per capita, is slightly under 1 (0.80). Another measure of service consumption, passenger trips per capita, is calculated to be 0.17. Passenger trips per revenue mile is 0.22, and passenger trips per revenue hour is 3.20. In the area of revenue miles between incidents, the County had just under 43,000 revenue miles between incidents.

Operating expense per capita is $0.63, with a $3.67 operating expense per passenger trip. Regarding vehicle utilization, the system achieved 32,100 revenue miles per total vehicles during the first year of service.

Performance Analysis Conclusion

Overall, the wide array of data presented in Chapter Three indicates that Okaloosa County is successfully providing transit services to its residents. As noted in the performance evaluation, the demand response services being provided are extremely effective and efficient, providing more service for less money than many peer transit systems. While a peer and trend analysis was not conducted for the fixed-route services, Okaloosa County should focus on the opportunity for improvement before the system truly matures.

It is important that the County continue to monitor the performance of these and other related measures using subsequent NTD and other data to see if and how they change as the system and its services mature. It is also helpful to complete trend analyses (comparing Okaloosa County’s performance from year-to-year) to identify areas for improvement. It is important to remember, however, that the performance evaluation methodology utilized herein is merely one tool for analyzing system performance and that the measures included are not able to cover all of the objectives of a transit system. Many objectives cannot be measured with this mechanism and require additional information or more subjective evaluation. However, these results
provide a useful starting point for a full understanding of the performance of the transit system and complement the other elements of this TDP.

CHAPTER FOUR: DEMAND ESTIMATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A necessary element in the development of a five-year transit development plan includes the computation of estimates of demand for transit service, the assessment of mobility needs in the county, and an evaluation of alternate methods for increasing mobility through various transit system improvements. Chapter Four contains ridership estimates for both the fixed-route and demand response services.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Based upon the system goals and objectives, demand estimates, and the findings from previous tasks, the following mobility-related needs have been identified. These are not listed in priority order.

- Improve/expand service coverage in the County
- Improve frequency and reliability of service
- Develop alternative service types
- Provide service between north and south Okaloosa County
- Secure long-term funding source
- Develop more user friendly system schedules, maps, and other information
- Develop transit education programs and advocacy initiatives
- Provide service to major employment sites

The various analyses contained in Chapter Four suggest that, because the system is relatively new, there is some level of unmet demand for fixed-route and/or paratransit service in Okaloosa County. Although current ridership figures on the WAVE may not suggest that there is great unmet demand, most believe that if the service were more convenient and available in additional areas, demand for the WAVE services would be much greater. The County continues to do the best job it can in providing service where it is needed, given its available resources. Demand projections suggest that ridership will continue to grow, especially as the County continues to develop and grow the WAVE.
CHAPTER FIVE: TRANSIT RECOMMENDATIONS AND FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL AND OPERATING PLAN

In Chapter Five, alternatives for the County's future direction are developed and analyzed, based on goals and initiatives established by the Okaloosa County TDP Review Committee, as well as external factors such as demographic characteristics, development patterns, and other determinants of transit use. From such alternatives, recommendations for transit improvements in Okaloosa County are presented.

All of the plan's recommendations are based on the county's vision and the goals and initiatives developed in Chapter Two. The recommendations are prioritized according to the following time frames: actions to be initiated within one year (FY 2003); years two and three (FYs 2004 and 2005); and years four and five (FYs 2006 and 2007). Finally, the five-year financial plan attaches capital and operating costs to the recommendations of the TDP for FYs 2003-2007.

Five-Year Transit Services Plan and Strategic Initiatives

A majority of the concerns regarding the WAVE network were related to the design and length of routes, frequency of the routes, lack of connectivity, and the limited areas served by the routes. Analyses of existing conditions indicate that the current WAVE routes are not optimally designed. In spite of the shortcomings of the Red, Blue, and Crestview routes, the Okaloosa Island and Destin Shuttles are better designed to meet the needs of customers and have met with outstanding success. This indicates that the route network for the County as a whole is underdeveloped and the County is ready to undergo a significant expansion in its transit route network. Analyses of the WAVE (Red, Blue, and Crestview) services indicated there are service deficiencies that are impacting operational performance and growth opportunities, including:

- Current loop routings are circuitous and do not foster direct origin/destination travel;
- Clockwise and counter-clockwise pairings create long travel times; and
- Frequency of service is not optimal given the geographical layout of Okaloosa County

CUTR proposes that Okaloosa County develop seven transit centers to accomplish this concept. Four of those seven facilities already function as transit centers in some way but will require improvements in the next five years. The existing transit centers are located at Uptown Station in Fort Walton Beach, Santa Rosa Mall in Mary Esther, the Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island, and Shoreline Mall in Destin. It is recommended that the remaining centers be placed in Niceville (2004), in Crestview (2005), and at the new County Transit Administration and Maintenance Facility (2006). CUTR recommends that upgrades to signage, benches, shelters, and other improvements be made to the existing transit centers: Shoreline Mall (2005), the

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Boardwalk (2006), Uptown Station (2007), and Santa Rosa Mall (2008). Figure 5-1 below provides a graphic depiction of the transit center concept.
Figure 5-1
Transit Center Concept
Okaloosa County Transit
FY 2003-2007

* = Transit Center
= Connections
Transit Network Concept

In this section, the transit routes that will be supported by the transit center network described above are outlined and also illustrated in map form. The basis for the design of this network is establishing a transit system that improves mobility options for customers by maximizing direct origin/destination travel throughout Okaloosa County; allocating service to those areas that show the greatest potential for ridership growth and need, ensuring accessibility to transit services with spatial distribution of routes on all major east-west and north-south corridors, reducing travel times by shortening routes and eliminating route deviations and out-of-direction travel; increasing frequency of service on routes (especially on major corridors) and creating more opportunities to transfer between routes via transit centers.

The Goals and Initiatives in Chapter Two call for Okaloosa County to conduct the following activities related to transit route expansion or modification in the five-year timeframe:

- Gradually phase out the Red, Blue, and Crestview WAVE routes in favor of bi-directional routes that connect between transit centers (Goal 1, Initiative D).
- Create local fixed-route service within Niceville and Valparaiso (Goal 1, Initiative D).
- Create a route that connects Valparaiso/Niceville with Eglin Air Force Base (Goal 1, Initiative E).
- Create a route that connects Valparaiso/Niceville with Fort Walton Beach (Goal 1, Initiative F).
- Create a route that connects Niceville/Bluewater Bay with Destin via the Mid-Bay Bridge (Goal 1, Initiative G).
- Create a route that connects Destin with the Beaches of South Walton via U.S. 98 (Goal 1, Initiative H).
- Continue to expand contract services with the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Council to serve the new Convention Center with all hotels on Okaloosa Island and Destin (Goal 1, Initiative J).
- Expand rural services in the northern portions of Okaloosa County for residents to access employment in urban centers (Goal 1, Initiative K).

The fixed-route network consists of sixteen new or modified routes for Okaloosa County to achieve all of the goals and initiatives described in Chapter Two. It must be noted that this is a concept network included to provide guidance to county staff, the County Commission, and the TPO in expanding services over the next several years. As is the case with any new route that is developed, the actual route configurations will eventually be developed and proposed by Okaloosa County staff in consultation with the TPO, communities being served, and other interested community groups.
The network concept is designed to gradually phase out the current Red, Blue, and Crestview WAVE routes by incorporating route segments that generate significant transit ridership into the new network concept. It is more aggressive in serving the mobility needs of residents and visitors to Okaloosa County, calls for higher service levels in terms of buses and annual revenue hours operated, and creates a rational and well-connected system. This route network is depicted in Figure 5-2, and detailed route information can be found in Chapter Five of the TDP.

While this proposed Transit Network Concept represents a significant increase in the capital and operating costs of the current route, the increase in the level of service deems the expenditures affordable and reasonable. As mentioned earlier, the development of the proposed transit network will extend beyond the timeframe of this five-year TDP.

Table 5-1 describes, in detail, the operating characteristics and cost summaries of the recommended route network for Okaloosa County. In calculating the operating characteristics and annual costs of the recommended route network, the factors of weekday revenue hours, total annual service hours, and buses required were used to calculate the annual cost of service for each route and for the total recommended network. The cost of service figures are expressed in 2002 dollars.

In addition, Figures 5-2 through 5-6 illustrate the recommended fixed-route network. Figure 5-2 shows the entire recommended fixed-route network; while, Figures 5-3 through 5-6 separate the network into smaller geographic areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weekday Span of Service</th>
<th>Weekend Span of Service</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Vehicle Requirement</th>
<th>Total Weekday Revenue Hours</th>
<th>Total Weekend Revenue Hours</th>
<th>Annual Revenue Hours</th>
<th>Annual Cost ($24.00/hr.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort Walton Beach 1</td>
<td>Local route connecting Uptown Station Transit Center to Bay Area Vo-Tech School via Beal Parkway</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3648</td>
<td>$87,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Walton Beach 2</td>
<td>Local route connecting Santa Rosa Mall Transit Center to Okaloosa Island via U.S. 98</td>
<td>8:00 AM - 10:00 PM</td>
<td>8:00 AM - 1:00 AM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5262</td>
<td>$126,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Walton Beach 3</td>
<td>Local route connecting Santa Rosa Mall Transit Center to Uptown Station Transit Center and the Boardwalk Transit Center via Hollywood Boulevard</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3648</td>
<td>$87,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Walton Beach 4</td>
<td>Local route connecting OCT Operations Transit Center to Uptown Station Transit Center via Racertrack Road and Eglin Parkway</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3648</td>
<td>$87,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Walton Beach 5</td>
<td>Local route connecting OCT Operations Transit Center to the Boardwalk Transit Center via Memorial Parkway and U.S. 98</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3648</td>
<td>$87,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destin 1</td>
<td>Local/tourist-oriented route connecting Destin Transit Center to Gulf Shore Boulevard and East Destin</td>
<td>8:00 AM - 10:00 PM</td>
<td>8:00 AM - 1:00 AM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5262</td>
<td>$126,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destin 2</td>
<td>Local/tourist-oriented route connecting Wayside Park/Convention Center Transit Center to the Destin Transit Center via U.S. 98</td>
<td>8:00 AM - 10:00 PM</td>
<td>8:00 AM - 1:00 AM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5262</td>
<td>$126,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niceville 1 and 2</td>
<td>Local service within Niceville connecting to the Niceville Transit Center</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3648</td>
<td>$87,552</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 5-1 (continued)**

Operating Characteristic and Cost Summary for Recommended Routes

**FY 2003-2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weekday Span of Service</th>
<th>Weekend Span of Service</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Vehicle Requirement</th>
<th>Total Weekday Revenue Hours</th>
<th>Total Weekend Revenue Hours</th>
<th>Annual Revenue Hours</th>
<th>Annual Cost ($/hr.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crestview 1</td>
<td>Local service within Crestview connecting to the Crestview Transit Center</td>
<td>6:00 AM 6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:00 AM 6:00 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3648</td>
<td>$87,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crestview 2</td>
<td>Local service within Crestview connecting to the Crestview Transit Center</td>
<td>6:00 AM 6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:00 AM 6:00 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3648</td>
<td>$87,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niceville-Crestview 1</td>
<td>Local service connecting Niceville Transit Center to the Crestview Transit Center via SR 85</td>
<td>6:00 AM 9:00 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
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Executive Summary

Okaloosa County Five-Year Transit Development Plan, 2003-2007
Figure 5-2
Destin/Walton County Area
Transit Network Concept

- Crestview Route 1
- Crestview Route 2
- Destin Route 1
- Destin Route 2
- Eglin AFB Route 1
- Ft Walton Express N
- Ft Walton Express N2
- Ft Walton Route 1
- Ft Walton Route 2
- Ft Walton Route 3
- Ft Walton Route 4
- Ft Walton Route 5
- Niceville Route 1
- Niceville Route 2
- Niceville Crestview Route 1
- Niceville-Destin Express
- Walton County Route 1
- Transfer Centers
Figure 5-4
Niceville
Service Area Concept

- Ft Walton Express N
- Ft Walton Express N2
- Eglin AFB Route 1
- Niceville-Crestview Route 1
- Niceville-Destin Express
- Transfer Centers
Figure 5-6
Destin/Walton County
Service Area Concept

- Destin Route 1
- Destin Route 2
- Eglin AFB Route 1
- Ft Walton Express N
- Niceville Route 1
- Niceville Route 2
- Niceville-Crestview Route 1
- Niceville-Destin Express
- Walton County Route 1
- Transfer Centers
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The initiatives are divided into two groups. The first set is related to strategies that are not service related and are designed to support Okaloosa County’s efforts to make transit more meaningful, viable, and utilized. The non-service related initiatives are prioritized by time frame for implementation: within the next year, over the next two-to-three years, and over the next four-to-five years. The second set provides detailed, year-by-year recommendations for the implementation of new transit centers and new services. The service-related recommendations are prioritized by similar time frames. It is expected that the transit development plan will be updated annually to account for changing conditions in Okaloosa County. The recommended projects and policies described in this section include many projects that represent major investments on the part of Okaloosa County. Full implementation of the TDP will require partnerships with communities to be served and other public and private partners.

Actions to be Initiated Within the Next Year (FY 2003)

1. Pursue the establishment of a long-term dedicated funding source for Okaloosa County Transit. (FY 2003 through FY 2007, Goal 4, Initiative A)

2. Continue vehicle replacement program and purchase new expansion vehicles for fixed-route services. (FY 2003 through 2008: Goal 1, Initiatives C-K and Goal 2, Initiative C)

3. Continue vehicle replacement program and purchase new expansion vehicles for paratransit services. (FY 2003 through 2008: Goal 2, Initiatives B and C)

4. Ensure the smooth transition of Community Transportation Coordinator function from Okaloosa Coordinated Transportation to Okaloosa County. (Prior to FY 2003: Goal 2, Initiative A)

5. Expand contract with marketing firm and intensity marketing efforts to population segments that have been identified as potential customers. (FY 2003 through FY 2007: Goal 3, Initiatives B-F)

6. Conduct focus groups to ascertain opinions of existing and potential customers on current and proposed transit initiatives. (FY 2003 through FY 2007: Goal 3, Initiative G)

7. Establish stronger involvement in the transportation planning and review process of Okaloosa County and its encompassing municipalities. (FY 2003: Goal 5, all initiatives)

8. Continue to maximize the use of the fixed-route bus system by encouraging those paratransit passengers whose origins and destinations are accessible through use of the WAVE to use it rather than paratransit service. (FY 2003 through FY 2007: Goal 2, Initiative E)
9. Continue to work with the TPO to incorporate transit design and amenities when road improvements are made to state, county and local road segments. (FY 2003 through FY 2007: Goal 5, Initiatives B and D)


11. Update and maintain the Okaloosa County Transit website as the transit system becomes more intricate. (FY 2003-2007: Goal 3, Initiatives A, I, and J)

Actions to be Initiated Over the Next Two-To-Three Years (FY 2004 and 2005)

12. Establish a transit area boundary to include urbanized areas of both Okaloosa County and Walton County. (FY 2004: Goal 1, Initiative A)

13. Conduct service performance assessments based on relevant performance measures and standards for all fixed-routes. (FY 2004 through FY 2007: Goal 1, Initiative L)

14. Develop a comprehensive communications program. (FY 2004: Goal 3, Initiative A)

15. Establish a unified theme for transit. (FY 2004: Goal 3, Initiative H)

16. Continue to develop and refine the transit center concept as a means of expanding new and existing fixed routes. (FY 2004 through 2006: Goal 1, Initiative A)

17. Develop partnerships to fund transit service improvements. (FY 2004 through 2007: Goal 4, Initiatives B and C)

18. Develop a policy education brochure to be distributed to paratransit customers. (FY 2004: Goal 2, Initiative D)

19. Maintain and utilize bus stop inventory. (FY 2004: Goal 2, Initiative F)


21. Continue to monitor all technology advancements applicable to public transportation, such as closed circuit television and advanced fare boxes that make tracking types of fares paid easier. (FY 2004 through FY 2007: Goal 3, Initiative J)

22. Continue the replacement or purchase of associated office equipment, as necessary. (FY 2004: Goal 2, Initiative A)

23. Continue the replacement or purchase of associate computer software, as necessary. (FY 2004: Goal 2, Initiative A)
24. Coordinate with local governments on establishing a countywide policy for the installation of bus shelters and benches.  *(FY 2005: Goal 5, Initiative A and J)*

25. Ensure the availability of user-friendly transit schedules, maps, and other marketing information.  *(FY 2005: Goal 3, Initiatives A and J)*


27. Ensure that the County's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, as well as those for all of the encompassing municipalities contain language that requires that public transportation be considered in future development and redevelopment.  *(FY 2005, Goal 5, Initiative B)*

**Actions to be Initiated Over the Next Four-To-Five Years (FY 2006 and 2007)**

28. Develop alternative service types to complement fixed-route services.  *(FY 2006: Goal 1, Initiative C)*

29. Coordinate with social service agencies to identify how to better serve their client's transportation needs, as well as to enlist the agencies' assistance with relaying paratransit policies to their clients (i.e. no show and cancellation policies).  *(FY 2006 and 2007: Goal 3, Initiative A and I)*

30. Initiate paratransit feeder services to the main regional transit centers.  *(FY 2007: Goal 2, Initiative B)*

31. Develop an interlocal agreement with municipalities in Okaloosa County that establishes level of financial assistance, as well as level of service in those areas.  *(FY 2007: Goal 4, Initiative C)*

**Service Related Strategic Initiatives (from Five-Year Transit Services Plan)**

**Actions to be Initiated Within the Next Year (FY 2003)**

32. Gradually phase out Red, Blue, and Crestview routes in favor of bi-directional routes that connect between transit centers.  *(FY 2003 through FY 2007: Goal 1, Initiative D)*

33. Expand fixed-route service within Destin.  *(FY 2003: Goal 1, Initiative D)*

34. Provide service between the new Okaloosa County Convention Center and hotels on Okaloosa Island and in Destin.  *(FY 2003: Goal 1, Initiative J)*

35. Expand fixed-route service within Fort Walton Beach.  *(FY 2003 through 2007: Goal 1, Initiative D)*
Actions to be Initiated Over the Next Two-to-Three Years (FY 2004 and 2005)

36. Create fixed-route service within Niceville and Valparaiso. (FY 2004: Goal 1, Initiative E)

37. Create a fixed-route that connects Valparaiso/Niceville and Eglin Air Force Base. (FY 2005: Goal 1, Initiative F)

38. Expand fixed-route service in Crestview. (FY 2005: Goal 1, Initiative A)

Actions to be Initiated Over the Next Four-to-Five Years (FY 2006 and 2007)

39. Create a fixed-route that connects Valparaiso/Niceville and Fort Walton Beach. (FY 2007: Goal 1, Initiative G)

40. Expand transit services in North Okaloosa County to include the rural areas in order to provide residents access to employment in urban centers. (FY 2007: Goal 1, Initiative K)

41. Develop express fixed-route service from Crestview to Niceville. (FY 2007: Goal 1, Initiative C)

42. Create a fixed-route that connects Niceville/Bluewater Bay and Destin via the Mid-Bay Bridge. (FY 2007: Goal 1, Initiative H)

43. Create a fixed-route that connects Destin and the Beaches of South Walton via U.S. 98. (FY 2007: Goal 1, Initiative I)

Five-Year Operating and Capital Improvement Program

Up to this point, the TDP process has not been constrained by fiscal considerations, in accordance with its strategic intent. Demographics, survey results, community input in various forms, and peer and trend analyses have all been used to assess the demand for transit service and to identify mobility needs in Okaloosa County. The recommendations presented herein have been based on previous findings and future directions. The final step in the transit development plan process is to estimate costs for these recommendations and compare them against current and anticipated financial resources.
Table 5-2 presents the Five-Year Operating and Capital Improvement Program to implement the Transit Services Plan and Strategic Initiatives for Okaloosa County. The following descriptions provide a brief explanation of each project item in the FY 2003-2007 Operating and Capital Improvement Program of the TDP.

1. **Operating Assistance** – This line item details the anticipated federal, state, and local revenues devoted to fixed-route operations for Okaloosa County (*implements Goals 1 and 2*).

2. **Preventative Maintenance (Capitalized Operating Expense)** – This line item details the eligible expenses for maintenance that can be capitalized under the Federal Section 5307 program (*implements Goals 1 through 5*).

3. **Marketing Contract (Capitalized Operating Expense)** – This line item represents expenses for general marketing activities that can be capitalized under the Federal Section 5307 program (*implements Goal 3*).

4. **Project Administration** – This line item represents expenses for grant administration eligible to be charged under the Federal Section 5307 program (*implements Goals 1 through 5*).

5. **FDOT Urban Corridor Project (Operating Expense Offset)** – This line item represents funding from the Florida Department of Transportation to provide transit services along the U.S. 98 corridor under the FDOT Corridor Program (*implements Goal 1*).

6. **FDOT Service Development (Operating Expense Offset)** – This line item represents a grant program for marketing the Okaloosa Island and Destin Shuttle services (*implements Goal 1 and 3*).

7. **FDOT Commuter Assistance** – This line item represents expenses associated with promoting ridesharing with major employers (*implements Goals 1*).

8. **Paratransit Vehicle Replacement** – This line item provides for the replacement of paratransit sedans and vans to maintain the current level of paratransit service in Okaloosa County. A total of 23 paratransit vehicles will be replaced over the five-year timeframe. (*implements Goal 2*)

9. **Microbus Replacement** – This line item provides for the replacement of Microbuses vehicles for use in Okaloosa County’s fixed-route service and complementary paratransit service under the Americans with Disabilities Act. (*implements Goals 1 and 2*)

10. **Microbus Expansion** – This line item provides for the procurement of 25 expansion microbuses to implement recommended service enhancements in the Five-Year Transit Services Plan. (*implements Goal 1*)
11. **Trolley Expansion** – This line item provides for the procurement of 12 expansion trolleys to add capacity and improve frequency along U.S. 98 to address tourism and ridership growth. (*implements Goal 1*)

12. **Bike Racks on Buses** - This line item provides for the purchase of bike racks on all new microbus and trolley purchases over the five-year timeframe. (*implements Goal 3, Initiative J*)

13. **Parking Lot** – This line item provides for the construction of an overflow parking lot at the site of the new Okaloosa County Transit Administration and Operations Facility. (*implements Goal 1*)

14. **Miscellaneous Equipment** – This line item represents the purchase of equipment, including computer and software upgrades, to maintain vehicles and facilities. (*implements Goals 1 and 2*)

15. **Security** – This line item provides for the implementation security improvements to buses and facilities, such as the purchase of closed-circuit televisions to improve security on transit vehicles and at transit facilities. (*implements Goal 4*)

16. **Training** – This line item provides for customer service and other types of staff training opportunities as services expand in the future. (*implements Goal 1*)

17. **Passenger Shelters** – This line provides for construction of passenger shelters and related amenities at bus stops with the Okaloosa County Transit system. (*implements Goal 3, Initiative J*).

18. **Additional marketing and communications** – This line item provides for marketing and communications initiatives beyond the general marketing duties established in the marketing contract. These initiatives include intensifying population segment marketing, conducting focus groups, developing a communications program, establishing a unified theme for transit, and the development of more user-friendly transit schedules and maps. (*implements Goal 3*)

19. **Develop Transit Centers** – This line item provides for expenses related to the upgrade or development of the 7 proposed transit centers in the recommended transit center concept as described in this TDP. Such expenses could include additional signage, bays, staging areas, etc. (*implements Goal 2*)

20. **Policy Education Brochures** – This line item provides for the development of brochures describing paratransit policies, such as procedures for making appointment, no-show penalties, and cancellation policies. (*implements Goal 3*)
# Table 5-2

## Five-Year Capital and Operating Plan

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<th>PROJECT ITEM</th>
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Executive Summary
Okaloosa County Five-Year Transit Development Plan, 2003-2007

33
Table 5-2 (continued)

Five-Year Capital and Operating Plan

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<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>FTA Section 5307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Costs of Project Items 8-20</td>
<td>$1,607,000</td>
<td>$1,897,500</td>
<td>$1,902,500</td>
<td>$2,247,500</td>
<td>$1,821,000</td>
<td>$2,475,000</td>
<td>$9,475,500</td>
<td>FTA Section 5307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| FEDERAL     | Section 5307                               | $2,167,000 | $2,012,500 | $1,722,500 | $1,622,500 | $1,506,000 | $1,506,000 | $9,030,500 |
|             | Section 5311                               | $62,665    | $60,000   | $60,000   | $60,000   | $60,000   | $60,000    | $302,665  |
| STATE       | FDOT Block Grant                            | $340,255   | $363,000   | $400,000   | $440,000   | $450,000   | $1,993,255 |                      |
|             | FDOT Corridor Funds                         | $482,000   | $482,000   | $482,000   | $482,000   | $482,000   | $2,410,000 |                      |
|             | FDOT Commuter Asst.                         | $10,000    | $10,000    | $10,000    | $10,000    | $10,000    | $50,000    |                      |
|             | FDOT Service Dev.                           | $200,000   | $200,000   | $200,000   | $200,000   | $200,000   | $1,000,000 |                      |
| LOCAL       | Local government                            | $107,500   | $112,875   | $117,390   | $122,086   | $126,969   | $586,820   |                      |
|             | Other Local                                 | $977,552   | $1,016,654 | $1,057,320 | $1,099,613 | $1,143,598 | $5,294,737 |                      |
| TOTALS      |                                            | $4,346,972 | $4,257,029 | $4,049,210 | $4,036,199 | $3,978,567 | $20,667,977 |                      |
Table 5-3 presents all of the operating and capital expenses in Table 5-2. In this table, operating and capital expenses are compared against existing revenue sources to determine the unfunded operating and capital expenses. In developing existing revenues, it was assumed that Okaloosa County would maintain a similar level of financial commitment over the five-year planning period.

### Table 5-3
Summary of Five-Year Capital and Operating Plan (FY 2003-2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating Expenses &amp; Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating Expenses</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed-route expense - 5 yr. Transit Service Plan</td>
<td>$378,864</td>
<td>$816,624</td>
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<td>Current system costs (paratransit + fixed-route)</td>
<td>$2,452,798</td>
<td>$2,550,910</td>
<td>$2,652,946</td>
<td>$2,759,064</td>
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<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$2,831,662</td>
<td>$3,367,534</td>
<td>$3,717,250</td>
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<td>$4,516,643</td>
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<td><strong>Projected Operating Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FTA Section 5307</td>
<td>$560,000</td>
<td>$715,000</td>
<td>$720,000</td>
<td>$775,000</td>
<td>$885,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTA Section 5311</td>
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<td>$60,000</td>
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<td>FDOT Block Grant</td>
<td>$340,255</td>
<td>$363,000</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$440,000</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDOT Corridor Funds</td>
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<td>$482,000</td>
<td>$482,000</td>
<td>$482,000</td>
<td>$482,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDOT Service Development</td>
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<td>$200,000</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDOT Commuter Ast.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>$107,500</td>
<td>$112,875</td>
<td>$117,390</td>
<td>$122,086</td>
<td>$126,969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Local</td>
<td>$977,552</td>
<td>$1,016,654</td>
<td>$1,057,320</td>
<td>$1,099,613</td>
<td>$1,143,598</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Revenues</strong></td>
<td>$2,739,972</td>
<td>$2,959,529</td>
<td>$3,046,710</td>
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<td><strong>Current Unfunded Operating</strong></td>
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<td>$408,005</td>
<td>$670,540</td>
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<td><strong>Capital Expenses &amp; Revenues</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paratransit vehicle replacement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microbus replacement</td>
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<td>$140,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microbus expansion</td>
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<td>$1,200,000</td>
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<td>Parking lot</td>
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<td>$200,000</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
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<td>$1,902,500</td>
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<td><strong>Capital Revenues</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>$1,704,500</td>
<td>$1,769,500</td>
<td>$1,693,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Capital Revenues</strong></td>
<td>$1,019,274</td>
<td>$1,629,500</td>
<td>$1,704,500</td>
<td>$1,769,500</td>
<td>$1,693,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current Unfunded Capital</strong></td>
<td>$587,726</td>
<td>$338,000</td>
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<td>$408,000</td>
<td>$478,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Okaloosa County Five-Year Transit Development Plan, 2003-2007 35
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Okaloosa County Five-Year Transit Development Plan—2003-2007